

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4252

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 13590

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: SNAR, MX
SUBJECT: PROPOSAL FOR US-MEXICO COMMISSION ON DRUG ABUSE

REF: STATE 188006

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY STRONGLY SUPPORTS OPTION THREE OF MEMORANDUM TRANSMITTED REFTEL. IN OUR VIEW, THE EXCELLENT COOPERATION WE ARE NOW RECEIVING ON NARCOTICS CONTROL SHOULD NOT BE JEOPARDIZED IN ORDER TO PROMOTE A PROPOSAL WHICH IS NO LONGER RELEVANT. NOR DO WE BELIEVE THAT THE LACK OF MEXICAN INTEREST IN A JOINT COMMISSION CAN BE CONVINCINGLY USED AS EVIDENCE OF AN UNCOOPERATIVE ATTITUDE, PARTICULARLY IF THE DEPARTMENT HAS FULLY BRIEFED THE CONGRESS ON THE EXTENT OF MEXICO'S NARCOTICS PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

2. THE TWIN COMMISSION CONCEPT WAS BORN 19 MONTHS AGO, DURING DIFFERENT ADMINISTRATIONS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER, AND AT A TIME WHEN A VARIETY OF FACTORS WERE CONTRIBUTING TO STRAINED RELATIONS. PRESS AND CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM OF THE MEXICAN NARCOTICS EFFORT (OR PERCEIVED LACK THEREOF) WAS AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH. MEXICO, FOR ITS PART, WAS HARPING ON THE NEED FOR BETTER LAW ENFORCEMENT AND DEMAND-REDUCTION EFFORTS INSIDE THE
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UNITED STATES. AERIAL APPLICATION OF HERBICIDES ON ILLICIT CROPS HAD NOT YET BEGUN WHEN PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA MET WITH CONGRESSMEN GILMAN AND WOLFF, AND MEXICO'S NARCOTICS CZAR (ALEJANDRO GERTZ) WAS BEGINNING TO SHOW SIGNS OF OPEN HOSTILITY TOWARD LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION (DEA).

3. ECHEVERRIA HAD, IN OUR OPINION, TWO MAJOR REASONS FOR PROPOSING "TWIN COMMISSIONS". FIRST, HE SOUGHT THIS DEVICE AS A WAY OF SHOWING PAPER, IF NOT ACTUAL PROGRESS. HARD DECISIONS CAN ALWAYS BE DEFERRED IF A COMMISSION IS STUDYING THE PROBLEM, ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT IS BETTER TO WAIT FOR THE EXPERTS TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION. SECOND, BY MAKING A DEFINITE TIE BETWEEN MEXICAN SUPPLY AND U.S. DEMAND FOR NARCOTICS, HE WAS SEEKING A PUBLIC FORUM IN WHICH MEXICO COULD ARGUE THAT, SINCE THE MAJOR MOTIVATING FACTORS FOR NARCOTICS ABUSE, I.E., DEMAND AND FINANCIAL GAIN, EXISTED PRIMARILY IN THE UNITED STATES, IT IS USELESS TO EXPECT MEXICO TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM ALL BY ITSELF. THE COMMISSION COMPOSITION HE SUGGESTED (EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE LEADERS INVOLVED IN BOTH ENFORCEMENT AND TREATMENT PROGRAMS, PLUS PARENTS AND JOURNALISTS) SUPPORTS THIS VIEW.

4. ALL OF THIS IS NOW WATER OVER THE DAM. MEXICO HAS ADOPTED HERBICIDE SPRAYING AS ITS PRIMARY WEAPON AGAINST NARCOTICS PRODUCTION AND HAS ACHIEVED A QUANTUM LEAP IN THE DESTRUCTION OF ILLICIT CROPS. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAS MULTIPLIED THE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WORKING ON NARCOTICS CONTROL AND IS MAKING RECORD DRUG SEIZURES. HE HAS DRAWN THE MEXICAN MILITARY INTO THE CAMPAIGN IN A MAJOR WAY. EMBASSY-GOM COOPERATION ON NARCOTICS SURPASSES OUR COOPERATION IN ANY OTHER FIELD, TO THE POINT
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THAT EMBASSY OFFICERS PARTICIPATE IN INTERNAL STAFF MEETINGS OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE AND DEA AIRCRAFT ARE FREE TO FLY WHEREVER THEY CHOOSE ON OBSERVATION MISSIONS. EVEN ENFORCEMENT, THE WEAKEST SIDE OF MEXICO'S PROGRAM, IS SHOWING SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT, AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAS CREATED A SERIES OF TASK FORCES, IN WHICH DEA OFFICERS PARTICIPATE, TO COLLECT AND COLLATE INTELLIGENCE ON MAJOR VIOLATORS. HE IS ALSO MOVING TO COMPUTERIZE NARCOTICS OFFENDER DATA IN A FORM WHICH WILL PERMIT THE RAPID EXCHANGE, THROUGH THE EMBASSY, OF INTELLIGENCE BETWEEN HIS OFFICE AND DEA'S EL PASO INTELLIGENCE CENTER.

5. IT IS TRUE THAT HEROIN IS STILL AVAILABLE IN THE UNITED STATES, BUT ACCORDING TO DATA REACHING US (MOST RECENTLY IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S DRUG MESSAGE TO CONGRESS), PURITY IS DOWN SIGNIFICANTLY AND THE PRICE IS UP. THESE MEASURES, WHICH THE CONGRESS AND DEA JOINTLY AGREED SHOULD BE USED TO EVALUATE PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS, WOULD INDICATE THAT THE MEXICAN EFFORT IS HAVING A REAL AND MEASURABLE IMPACT.

6. IN VIEW OF THE MEXICAN COMMITMENT, BACKED BOTH BY CONSIDERABLE FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND BY THE LOSS OF THE LIVES OF NUMEROUS AIRCREWS AND AGENTS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE WHAT ADDITIONAL POSITIVE IMPACT THE OLD "TWIN COMMISSION" PROPOSAL COULD HAVE. ON THE CONTRARY, THE PROPOSAL COULD INTRODUCE COMPLICATIONS AND WASTE MAN HOURS PREPARING BRIEFING PAPERS FOR FORMAL COMMISSION MEETINGS.

7. RECOMMENDATION: WE VIEW BOTH OPTION ONE AND OPTION FOUR AS UNDESIRABLE AS THEY ARE CERTAIN TO GENERATE UNNEEDED WORK, DIVERT ATTENTION FROM PROGRAM IMPLEMEN-

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MEXICO 13590

TATION, DILUTE PRESENT EFFORTS, AND RISK DAMAGING THE EXCELLENT LEVEL OF COOPERATION WE NOW ENJOY. WE BELIEVE OPTION TWO TO BE EQUALLY UNDESIRABLE AS IT WOULD CREATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSIONS COMPLETELY SEPARATE FROM THE U.S. AND MEXICAN ORGANIZATIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.

8. THE EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS ADOPTION OF OPTION THREE AS EXPRESSED IN REFTEL. IF THIS OPTION CANNOT BE ADOPTED, WE WOULD, WITH RELUCTANCE, FALL BACK TO OPTION FOUR. (FYI: WE HAVE NO REASON WHATSOEVER TO BELIEVE THAT THE GOM WOULD ACCEPT OPTION FOUR READILY. ON THE CONTRARY, WHEN THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING A NARCOTICS SUBGROUP OF THE SOCIAL WORKING GROUP WAS DISCUSSED WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL FLORES DURING THE BOURNE-FALCO VISIT IN MAY, FLORES FLATLY STATED THAT NO RPT NO ADDITIONAL COORDINATING MECHANISMS ARE NEEDED.

HE HAS REITERATED THIS VIEW ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS, MOST
RECENTLY WHEN THE AMBASSADOR CALLED ON HIM ON JULY 28.)
LUCEY

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